

## OPINION 1955

### *Strombidion caudatum* Fromentel, 1876 (currently *Strobilidium caudatum*; Ciliophora, Oligotrichida): specific name placed on the Official List

**Keywords.** Nomenclature; taxonomy; Protozoa; Ciliophora; Oligotrichida; *Strobilidium gyrans*; *Strobilidium caudatum*; *Strombidium kahl*; *Strombidium claparedi*; *Rimostrombidium caudatum*; ciliates.

#### Ruling

- (1) The name *caudatum* Fromentel, 1876, as published in the binomen *Strombidion caudatum*, is hereby placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology.

#### History of Case 3011

An application for the conservation of the specific names of *Strombidium gyrans* Stokes, 1887 and *Strobilidium caudatum* Kahl, 1932 by the suppression of *Strombidion caudatum* Fromentel, 1876 and *Strombidium claparedi* Kent, 1882 was received from Dr Charles W. Heckman (*Institut für Hydrobiologie und Fischereiwissenschaft, Hamburg, Germany*) on 15 January 1996. After correspondence the case was published in BZN 55: 6–8 (March 1998). Notice of the case was sent to appropriate journals.

Comments opposing the application from Prof Dr Wilhelm Foissner (*Universität Salzburg, Institut für Zoologie, Salzburg, Austria*) and from Dr John O. Corliss (*Pennsylvania, U.S.A.*) were published in BZN 55: 233–236 (December 1998). A reply from the author of the application was published in BZN 56: 48–49 (March 1999). A further comment from Prof Foissner was published in BZN 56: 142 (June 1999).

#### Decision of the Commission

On 1 March 2000 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the proposals published in BZN 55: 7. At the close of the voting period on 1 June 2000 the votes were as follows:

Affirmative votes — 5: Eschmeyer, Kraus, Martins de Souza, Savage, Schuster

Negative votes — 17: Bock, Bouchet, Brothers, Cocks, Cogger, Dupuis, Heppell, Kerzhner, Macpherson, Mahner, Mawatari, Minelli, Papp, Patterson, Ride, Song and Štys.

No vote was received from Nielsen.

Lehtinen was on leave of absence.

Dupuis commented: 'Il eut été souhaitable de disposer de plus précisions quant aux descriptions, figures et types des espèces en cause. Des informations, même négatives, quant aux types de genres considérés eussent, de même, été utiles. Néanmoins, je suis convaincu par l'excellente argumentation nomenclatoriale de Corliss sur les pratiques décevantes de certains ciliatologistes (BZN 55: 233–236). Je suis en outre très sensible à la remarque taxinomique de Foissner (BZN 56: 142) sur les recherches qu'exige encore une comparaison sérieuse des espèces européenne et nord-américaine. En conséquence, je vote contre la proposition de Heckman'. Heppell commented: 'There

are two issues in this case. As well as the opposing views about priority versus usage, there is a further question (on which Foissner touches briefly in his second comment on BZN 56: 142), namely the very subjective synonymy of two nominal species, *Strobilidium caudatum* (Fromentel, 1876) and *S. gyrans* (Stokes, 1887), both originally poorly described and from widely-separated localities. If both these are essentially nomina dubia, neither priority nor usage has any special merit unless, in the absence of type material or an adequate original description, it is stated how the names are to be interpreted. I am, therefore, in favour of retaining the oldest name, *Strobilidium caudatum* (Fromentel, 1876), at least in the sense of the European populations (ignoring the totally insufficient descriptions of Müller's three species of *Trichoda* mentioned on BZN 56: 49). *Strobilidium gyrans* (Stokes, 1887) would remain available for the North American populations if they should eventually be recognized as not conspecific with *S. caudatum*. Rather than compromise sound taxonomy by placing an avowed nomen dubium on the Official List, I suggest that the name be interpreted with reference to the description and illustrations provided by Foissner (1991), as the designation of a neotype seems less appropriate for a ciliate taxon'. Kerzhner commented: 'Since both the names *Strobilidium caudatum* (Fromentel, 1876) and *S. gyrans* (Stokes, 1887) are in use, priority should be applied'. Patterson commented: 'The situation raised in this case is widespread among protists, both 'zoological' and 'botanical'. The identities of many taxa rely on very inadequate early descriptions, there is no associated type material, and no further records. There are different strategies to deal with these taxa: (a) to treat the organisms as unidentifiable and evade linking these uncertain identities and their names to taxa currently recognized, or (b) to prevent the continued existence of old names that relate to taxa with uncertain identities. I personally favour (b), and achieve the objective by finding all possible synonyms, giving precedence on the basis of priority and then adding a contemporary interpretation of the identity of that taxon. This is what Foissner has done, so I have empathy with his view. In this case we have an additional dimension in that a user of names (an ecologist) is in dispute with taxonomists. This has arisen because the taxonomists have not solved the identity problems fast enough to provide ecologists with the tools they need. There is now a resolution to this particular problem, but it came very late (i.e. after ecologists had started to use a junior name). In this case there was a choice between actions aimed at eliminating instability and those aimed at eliminating ambiguity, and I favour the second alternative. In my view, Heckman's desire was for 'stability now', but Foissner has removed ambiguity and this will give 'stability in the future'.

Since there was a majority against the use of the plenary power to set aside the provisions of the Code, the specific name of *Strombidion caudatum* Fromentel, 1876 (currently known as *Strobilidium caudatum*), which relates to a European freshwater oligotrichous species, is placed on the Official List.

The name *Strobilidium caudatum* Kahl, 1932, which refers to a European brackish water oligotrich, is a junior secondary homonym of *Strobilidium caudatum* (Fromentel, 1876) and the replacement name *S. kahli* Petz & Foissner, 1992 is valid for the taxon if placed in *Strobilidium* Schewiakoff, 1892. If the species is placed in *Rimostrombidium* Jankowski, 1978 (BZN 56: 48, 142), the specific name *caudatum* Kahl is reinstated (Article 59.4 of the Code).

**Original reference**

The following is the original reference to the name placed on an Official List by the ruling given in the present Opinion:

*caudatum*, Strombidion Fromentel, 1876. *Études sur les microzoaires ou infusoires proprement dits comprenant de nouvelles recherches sur leur organisation, leur classification et la description des espèces nouvelles ou peu connues*, p. 264, pl. 24, figs. 7–8.